DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 381 206 JC 950 196

AUTHOR High, Clennis
TITLE A Descriptive Study of Southwest College: An Analysis of Selected Variables as They Relate to Students' Attitudes toward Campus Safety, Available Services, and the Need for Special Programs. An Exploratory Study.
INSTITUTION Southwest Coll., Houston, TX.
PUB DATE 29 Oct 94
NOTE 33p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Choice; Community Colleges; Educational Environment; Organizational Climate; *Participant Satisfaction; *School Safety; School Surveys; *Student Attitudes; *Student Problems; Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Southwest College (SC), in Texas, to ascertain students' attitudes toward campus safety and the college's responsiveness to student needs. The study also sought to determine if students considered safety issues when choosing a campus, if they perceived a need for a safety organization, and if they encountered non-safety related problems in significant numbers. Questionnaires were distributed to academic and non-academic students in classes, with a random sample of 69 completed forms gathered for the analysis. Survey results included the following: (1) 70% of the sample were female, 37% were between the ages of 23 and 27, 59% were White, 9% were Black, and 13% were Hispanic; (2) 56% felt the campus was relatively safe, compared to 25% who felt the campus was not safe; (3) 84% had not encountered an incident on campus that made them feel unsafe; (4) 78% indicated that safety was a factor in determining where they took their classes, with 90% of the females and 52% of the males indicating that it was a factor; (5) 71% felt that a program was needed to monitor and react to unsafe and problematic situations; (6) responses indicated that students were generally satisfied with Southwest College's efforts to address their concerns; and (7) when students were asked to indicate the types of non-safety related problems encountered at SC, many responses fell into the facilities' domain. (KP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 381 206

A Descriptive Study Of Southwest College:

An Analysis Of Selected Variables As They Relate To Students' Attitudes Toward Campus Safety, Available Services, And The Need For Special Programs

(An Exploratory Study)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

October 29, 1994

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. High

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

By:

Dr. Clennis High
Counselor
Southwest College
Houston Community College System

JC 950 196

Organization of Study

This study consists of four (4) Sections, Acknowledgments, and a Bibliography. The order of this study is organized in the following sequence:

Section I:
Introduction
Design of Study
Purpose of Study
Study Objectives
Population
The Sample
Definition of Terms
Instrument Used
Table 1: Demographics

Section II:
Procedure of Study
Survey Results (Statistical computations and proportion breakdown on an item-by-item basis of all the items included in the survey)
Table 2: Chi-square Test
Table 3: Chi-square Test
Table 4: 2 x 4 Table Showing Safety as a Factor Determining Where Classes Taken by Ethnicity
Table 5: Mean ($\bar{x}$) Sex Score and Mean ($\bar{x}$) Score for Item VII Compared by T-test for Correlated Samples
Table 6: Computations of Mean, Variance, and Standard Deviation

Section III:
Data Analysis (consisting of Statistical Analysis of the Study and Limitations)
Table 7: Safety of Campus by Sex
Table 8: Problems Not Safety Related Catergorized

Section IV:
Summary, Findings, and Implications to Southwest College
Conclusion
Appendix: Sample of Survey Instrument Used
References

Acknowledgments

After three long months, this project is finally over; now I will be able to get to bed before midnight. I would like to give a special thanks to members of the instructional staff who's assistance in this study was very valuable. Without their help, it is doubtful that the study would have went as smooth as it did. Namely, those valiant warriors are:

Dr. Luis L. Salinas II
Linda Flowers
Stephen Payton
Louis David Naman

Also, I would like to thank the **Counseling Staff of Southwest College** for being so supportive of this endeavor, and for all of the "little" things they did to help.

Finally, I would like to thank **Dean, Fena Garza** for her ever watchful eye, and direction when I came to the crossroads or found myself in "unfamiliar territory", thanks Boss!

Section I

Introduction

In our society today, there is a tremendous concern for personal safety as well as for various other problems and concerns that face individuals and groups. Likewise, there is also a great concern relative to the people or programs that are created to address the affore mentioned.

These concerns are being mirrored on our college campuses, including Southwest College. Many students tend to frequent colleges or campuses where they perceive that problems of the above nature are minimized. In addition, new laws and statues such as: The Campus Security Act, Sexual Assault Victims Bill of Rights, and Amendments to the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act has established new obligations for colleges and universities.

It is very important to understand the significance and scope of this problem. It is equally important to work diligently and effectively to ascertain what the needs and concerns are of our students, colleagues, and community, and address those needs and concerns. Creating programs that are "grounded" in a preventative philosophy, rather than a reactionary one, is a positive step toward this endeavor.

Design of Study

The design used for this empirical investigation was descriptive. According to Borg and Gall (1989), descriptive research is used to "describe" the data collected on a research sample, and to find out "what is". Further, it is noted by Isaac and Michael (1977) that the characteristics of a population can be systematically explicated accurately by means of descriptive inferential research methods. Finally, Joseph F. Healey (1984) indicates that descriptive statistics are relevant (1) when a summary or description of a single variable is needed by the researcher, and (2) when the researcher seeks to understand the relationship between two or more variables.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this investigation was to gather information relative to students' attitudes and perceptions at The Southwest College (S.W.C.) of the Houston Community College System. More specifically, the study was designed to identify those attitudes and perceptions which are germane to the student's concerns. In addition to identification of these concerns, it is hoped that the level of significance placed on the various categories of concern by the students can be ascertained. Finally, information from this study will provide data that may be used to create programs to address the concerns of students at Southwest College.

Study Objectives

1. To ascertain what students' attitudes are toward Southwest College campuses in regard to their being safe.

2. To determine if students really consider safety issues when choosing the campuses they want to attend.

3. To determine if students perceive that there is a need for an organization or program at Southwest College to monitor and react to safety concerns and other problems that might be encountered.

4. To ascertain what students attitudes are in regard to Southwest College willingness to provide people and programs to address the concerns of students.

5. To determine if students encounter non-safety related problems in significant numbers, and to be able to identify these problems.

Population

The population of this study included the student body of Southwest College. The Southwest College is a member college of the Houston Community College System, and is geographically located in the southwest section of Harris County, Texas and the north section of Fort Bend County, Texas. Included in the campuses of Southwest College are the following:

Alief
Bellaire
Free Enterprise
Galleria
Gulfton
Lee
Owner Builder
Paul Revere
Sharpstown
Stafford (including Greenbriar Annex)
Sutton
Welch
Westbury

The population included academic as well as non-academic students.

The Sample

The sample included sixty-nine (69) respondents which were drawn randomly from the Southwest College population. The sample included academic as well as non-academic students from both day and evening campuses. Due to the random selection process, the sample was very heterogeneous and basically reflected the overall population make-up of Southwest College as is revealed in Table I: Demographics.

Sample Used:

On the on-set of this study this researcher wanted to maintain a precision level (interval rate) of no larger than ±10%. With a level of precision of ±10% any data received from the sample has only a 10% chance of inaccuracy. More over, it was desired to maintain the 90% confidence interval.

Confidence Interval (CI) → Z = 1.65

Alpha Level = .10

This researcher did not know the Sample Size (N) to achieve these requirements, hence, the following formula was used:

$$N = \frac{(Z^2)(Pu)(1-Pu)}{(P)^2} = \frac{(Z^2)(Pu)(1-Pu)}{(.10)^2} = 68$$

Z = Z-score associated with 90% (CI) on normal curve (1.65)

Pu = Population proportion (0.5, constant)

P = Precision Level (±10%)

A Sample Size (N) of 68 would be required to maintain a ±10% Precision Level at the 90% Confidence Interval. The Sample Size used for this study was 69.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been operationalized for this study:

Southwest College..... The college within the Houston Community College System which is made-up of the following campuses (also called centers):

Alief
Bellaire
Free Enterprise
Galleria
Gulfton
Lee
Owner Builder
Paul Revere
Sharpstown
Stafford (including Greenbriar Annex)
Sutton
Welch
Westbury

Campus..... The physical locality, within the Southwest College, which is used for academic purposes as well as other educational matters.

Student..... A person who is currently enrolled at one or more campus/center at the Southwest College either in academic or non-academic classes.

Un-Safe..... A quality or condition which is not believed to be free from danger or injury.

Safety..... The quality or condition of being safe with a perception of security, and being free from danger, injury, or damage.

Instrument:

The instrument "Southwest College Student Survey" was used in this study. The items on the survey were drawn from a pool of possible items. This pool was derived from interviews and conversations with members of the Southwest College population and reflected what their concerns are and were. Following inductive logical reasoning, it is highly probable that the items used measured the attitudes and perceptions of the respondents, and did so on a consistent basis.

Although this study was small scaled and conducted for the purposes of Southwest College only, the empirical process has been followed stringently. It is endemic to the process of quantitative research that the instrument of choice be standardized, or steps be taken to address the issues of reliability and validity. This study is quantitative in nature.

Reliability and Validity of the Southwest College Student Survey:

After the survey was designed from the pool of possible items, it was then given to a panel of research experts at a local university. This researcher asked this panel to assess each item and the survey as a whole for purposes of validity. The panel, individually, graded the survey:

(4) Excellent
(3) Good
(2) Fair
(1) Poor

The instrument received a mean ($\bar{x}$) score of 3.785 when the figures were computed from the validation sheet. After validation, it was decided that this would be the only survey instrument used for this investigation.

The split-halve reliability method was employed for computing a reliability coefficient. In this pre-test procedure, a sample was selected from the Northwest College which is also a member of the Houston Community College System and whose population is similar to that of Southwest College and some respondents were given even number items and some were given odd number items. When the values were computed a coefficient of .71 was achieved, however, when the Spearman-Brown Formula was applied to the split-halve coefficient, the reliability coefficient for the survey as a whole was computed to be .73. A coefficient of .70 is considered to be acceptable (Bronie and Kintz, 1969). Based on the above criterion, this survey was deemed to be acceptable for this investigation.

Demographics

TABLE 1
Number and Percentage of Respondents by Age, Sex, and Ethnicity

VARIABLES	NUMBER	(%)
Sex		
Male	21	30%
Female	48	70%
	69	**100%**
Age		
17-22	17	25%
23-27	26	37%
28-33	11	16%
34+	15	22%
	69	**100%**
Ethnicity		
White	41	59%
Black	6	9%
Hispanic	9	13%
Other	13	19%
	69	**100%**

Displayed in Table 1 are discriptive characteristics of Age, Sex, and Ethnicity as they are related to this study.

Section II

Procedure of Study

The researcher obtained permission from instructors and others to conduct this research project among students of Southwest College. In some cases, instructors trained in research methods administered the survey instrument with instructions and assistance from this researcher. Each participant was randomly selected from the campuses of Gulfton, Paul Revere, Galleria, and Stafford of the Southwest College.

After the survey instruments were completed, they were collected by the researcher and checked for errors and inappropriate responses; there were none. After carefully checking the instruments, they were coded for ease of statistical analysis and identification purposes, no names were used in this study. Finally, the data was input into a computerized statistical system. The system used for this study was J. B. Stat.

Variables of Interest and Methods of Analysis

The independent and dependent variables used for this study are shown in the following table:

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	DEPENDENT VARIABLE
• Age • Ethnicity • Sex	• Attitudes toward campus safety at Southwest College • Attitudes in regards to the need for programs at Southwest College • Perception of the level or quality of service and concern at Southwest College • Perception of whether problems other than safety exist at Southwest College

The data obtained from the study was analyzed using the Chi-Square (χ^2) Test for Independence, The Point Biserial Correlation Procedure, T-Test for Correlated Samples, and Cramers V-Test for Association. Additionally, various charts and tables were used for display and description of data.

Survey Results

Demographic information **(Items I-III)** are discussed in Section I.

Item IV: Students Perception of Safety at Southwest College Campuses.

		Breakdown by Sex	
		Male	**Female**
YES =	39 or 56%	9 or 43.0%	30 or 63.0%
NO =	17 or 25%	6 or 28.5%	11 or 23.0%
N/A =	13 or 19%	6 or 28.5%	7 or 14.0%
	N = 69 or 100%	21 or 100.0%	48 or 100.0%

TABLE 2
Chi-Square (χ^2) Test of Independence

Alpha Level = .05 Confidence Interval = 95% DF = 2	χ^2 Critical = 5.991 χ^2 Obtained = 1.71 No significant difference at .05 level.

Item V: Incidents That Made Students Feel Unsafe at Southwest College.

YES =	9 or 13%
NO =	58 or 84%*
N/A =	2 or 3%
	N = 69 or 100%

** Highest response percentage in survey.*

Item VI: Need For Program at Southwest College.

YES =	49 or 71%*
NO =	12 or 17%
N/A =	8 or 12%
	N = 69 or 100%

** Second highest response in survey.*

Item VII: Attitude toward safety as a factor determining where classes are taken.

		Breakdown by Sex	
		Male	Female
YES =	54 or 78%	1 or 52.0%	43 or 90.0%
NO =	15 or 22%	10 or 48.0%	5 or 10.0%
N/A =	0 or 0%	0 or 0.0%	0 or 0.0%
N = 69 or 100%		21 or 100.0%	48 or 100.0%

TABLE 3
Chi-Square (χ^2) Test of Independence

C.I. = 99 Alpha Level = .01 DF = 1	*χ^2 Obtained = 11.87 χ^2 Critical = 6.635 Reject H_0

* *Sig at .01 Level*

CRAMERS V-TEST OF ASSOCIATION

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2(\text{obtained})}{(N)(\text{minimumof } r\text{-}1,\ C\text{-}1)}} =$$

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{11.87}{(69)(1)}} = \sqrt{\frac{11.87}{69}} = \sqrt{.1720289} = .42$$

$$\left(\frac{.42}{100} = 42\% \text{ association of variable}\right)$$

TABLE 4

2 x 4 table showing safety as a factor determining where classes taken by ethnicity.

Item VII: "Is safety a factor that students consider when determining where to take classes?"	**Ethic Affiliation** (1) W	(2) B	(3) H	(4) O	**Totals:**
(1) YES	(73%) 30	(83%) 5	(88%) 8	(84%) 11	**54**
(2) NO	(24%) 10	(17%) 1	(22%) 2	(16%) 2	**15**
W = White **B = Black** **H = Hispanic** **O = Other**	**40**	**6**	**10**	**13**	**69**

TABLE 5

Mean ($\bar{x}$) sex score and mean ($\bar{x}$) score for Item VII compared by T-test for correlated samples.

(Pairwise T-Test)

Sex		**Safety as a factor...**
($\bar{x}$) = 1.710145		($\bar{x}$) = 1.217391
SD = .488137		SD = .415493
Mean Difference:	.492754	
	.091458	
T-Value	5.38777	* * *
DF =	68	
2-Tailed Prob.	<.0001	

** The dependent variable was collapsed from (YES, NO, N/A) to (YES, NO) on Item VII. This was done to facilitate the computation or (χ^2).*

As there were zero (0) responses in the (N/A) section for Item VII, this adjustment did not effect the outcome of the Chi-Square statistic. According to Joseph Healey (1984) it is acceptable to combine categories or collapse them in the computational process of Chi-Square (χ^2). This adjustment created a (2x2) table instead of a 3x2 table.

Item VIII: Students attitudes about available personnel in the southwest college to express there concerns to.

		Breakdown by Sex	
		Male	Female
YES =	47 or 68%	13 or 17.0%	34 or 49.0%
NO =	10 or 15%	3	7
N/A =	12 or 17%	4	8
N =	69 or 100%	20	49

Item IX: Students attitudes as to whether Southwest College provides people or programs to address their concerns.

** For this variable an interval scale (1-10) was used with 1=lowest degree and 10=highest degree.*

Also, a computed point Biserial Value of rpbis = -.1044 indicates no relationship between Sex and Attitude of this variable.

TABLE 6
Computation of Mean, Variance, and Standard Deviation

Variable	X	S	S2	N
The degree to which Southwest College provides people/programs to address students concerns.	6.7	1.88	3.53	69
	mean	standard deviation	variance	
		measures of dispersion		

Section III

Data Analysis

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:

Age Range: There were four (4) age categories.

(1) 17-22
(2) 23-27
(3) 28-33
(4) 34+

The highest percentage (37%) fell in the 23-27 range with the range of 17-22 being slightly lower at 25%. 22% of the sample fell within the category of 34+ and the lowest percentage (16%) were between the ages of 28-33.

Ethnicity/Sex: The ethnic make-up of the sample had the highest percentage (59%) in Category 1 which was "White". The second highest category was Category 4 which was "Other" (comprising several groups), and Category 3, "Hispanic" and Category 2, "Black" were third and fourth respectively. Moreover, 21 males (30%) and 48 Females (70%) made up the sample [N].

When observing Item IV, dealing with the students perception of the safety of Southwest College campuses, it appeared that there was significant difference between the responses of men versus women. This can be seen in the table below.

TABLE 7

SAFETY OF CAMPUSES	SEX		
	Male	Female	
Campuses relatively safe (YES)	9 (13%)	30 (43%)	39
Campuses relatively safe (NO)	6 (9%)	11 (16%)	17
N/A	6 (9%)	7 (10%)	13
	21	48	69

However, when the Chi-Square Test for Independence was applied to test for a statistical significant difference, it was revealed that there was not a significant difference. The obtain (χ^2) was 1.71 and (χ^2) critical, with alpha at .05 and c.i. at 95%, was 5.991. The Ho was not rejected, and it was concluded that sex was not necessarily a determinate of how one responded to Item IV. It is important however, to mentioned that 57% of the sample believed that the campuses at Southwest College are relatively safe and only 25% responded negatively.

Item V asks the question "If a student has had an incident at Southwest College which made him/her feel unsafe. The data collected on this item indicates that a whopping 84% responded in the negative, and only (9) or 13% indicated that they had some incident which made them feel unsafe. Further, it is important to point out that the percentage of responses indicating "NO" incidents which made them feel unsafe (84%) was the highest percentage in the study.

Item VI yields the second highest percentage response. The item asked if some program is needed to monitor and react to unsafe and problematic situations. 71% of the sample indicated that a program is needed and 17% responded to the negative. Based on the data, it appears that most of the respondents are favorable to the development of a program.

Item VII attempted to measure students attitudes toward safety and if safety was a significant factor which affected their choice of campuses. In reaction to this question 78% of the sample responded "YES" and only 22% responded in the negative; no one gave a response of "N/A". When the data was further broken down it was discovered that 52% of men responded "YES" and 90% of women responded "YES". In contrast, 48% of men responded negatively and only 10% of women respondents gave "NO" for their response.

In as much as these responses were of significant proportions for men and women, the chi-square statistical method was applied to the data to ascertain if a significant difference existed between male and female responses. The computation revealed that a significant difference did exist at the .01 alpha level (χ^2 obt. = 11.87, χ^2 critical = 6.635), and that the variables are dependent. Further the association was found to be of moderate strength when the Cramers V Formula was applied to the data. In regard to this item, women responded "YES" that safety is a factor when determining where they will take their college classes, and their response was statistically significantly higher than that of men. Further, when the T-Test for correlated samples was applied a value of 5.34 was computed (Sig. at .0001).

Item VIII asked if students believed that there were enough available personnel on the various campuses to express their concerns. Forty-seven (47) respondents or 68% of the sample indicated that they believe there are enough people, and only ten (10) or 15% responded negatively. Twelve (12) or 17% gave a response of "N/A". When the responses were broken down by sex, it showed seventeen percent (17%) of males responded "YES" and 49% of the females responded "YES" in regard to Item VIII. Although a large proportion of the samples attitudes were favorable toward people being available, it appears that women were even more favorable than were men.

Item IX was designed to determine whether students perceived that an adequate number of people or programs have been provided by Southwest College to address various concerns. Using an interval scale of 1-10, a mean $\bar{x}$ score of 6.7 (rounded to 7) was computed, and a standard deviation of only 1.88. Based on this data, 7 out of 10 students perceived Southwest College to be providing adequate people and programs.

Item X is problems that students encounter that are not safety related. Forty-nine percent (49%) answered "YES". These responses were collapsed into three (3) categories:

(1) Counseling concerns
(2) Academic concerns
(3) Facility concerns

Item X do students feel that they encounter problems other than safety related. A large proportion (49%) indicated that they believe students do encounter other types of problems and only (17) or (25%) responded "NO".

Table 8

Counseling	Academic	Facilities
17 or 35.4%	5 or 10.4%	26 or 54.2%

Total Responses = 48

The above table shows the number of respondents, by number and proportion (%) in each category. The raw responses were collapsed into three categories relative to the types of problems that students encounter. These categories are:

- Problems that counselors can address.
- Problems that can best be addressed by an academic person.
- Problems that are related to the facilities person(s).

Examples of the types of responses:

- drugs, sexual harassment, personal life
- dirty restrooms
- parking lot and back entrances not monitored
- poor lighting, guards not available, lights in parking area, poor directions/no directions, dirty restrooms, missing doors
- desk to small
- parking area not clearly marked, dark walkways
- no patrol to walk to your car with you
- need guard visible and to escort to car
- office personnel don't have answers
- escorts to car, TASP concern

- no answers to certain requirement questions
- personal counseling, bathroom quality
- teacher problems
- not enough parking, not enough class selection, vending, parking?
- parking problems
- not enough parking space
- recreational activities and counseling
- parking, teachers accents, tutor service
- tutors availability, parking, student lounge lighting, vending machines, no cafeteria on campus
- parking lot traffic, students not aware of services
- personal counseling, job placement
- escort to cars
- more security
- have more qualified permanent teachers, parking
- parking, knowledgeable employees, promptness on returning calls, registration

Limitations

This study was limited to the following significant factors:

1. To four campuses within the Southwest College.
2. To the period between August 22, 1994 and October 1, 1994.
3. A representative sample of students from the Southwest College.
4. The survey instrument developed by the researcher.
5. To a descriptive analysis of selected variables as they relate to Southwest College students toward campus safety, available services, and the need for special programs.

Section IV

Summary, Findings, and Implications to Southwest College

In the outset of this study, it was decided that (5) objectives would be addressed. Those objectives, to be investigated, were namely:

1) To ascertain what students' attitudes are toward Southwest College campuses in regard to their being safe.

2) To determine if students really consider safety issues when choosing the campus they want to attend.

3) To determine if students perceive that there is a need for an organization or program at Southwest College to monitor and react to safety concerns and other problems that might be encountered.

4) To ascertain what students' attitudes are in regard to Southwest College willingness to provide people or programs to address the concerns or students.

5) To determine if students encounter non-safety related problems in significant numbers, and to be able to identify these problems.

These objectives were generated from interactions and interviews with students within the Southwest College System, as well as from Administrators, Instructors, Counselors, and others who are sensitive to Institutional concerns.

Regarding the first objective, dealing with the attitudes of students in regard to Southwest College campuses being safe, it was found that 56% of the respondents indicated that they felt the campuses as a whole were relatively safe. In contrast, only 25% indicated a negative response, and 19% responded "N/A". Moreover, when the variable "sex" was broken down, it was revealed that 43% of male respondents felt that campuses were safe. This indicates a more favorable attitude for women than for men. It might be pointed out at this point, however, that when the Chi-Square Test for independence was computed, it was found that no statistically significance existed between the responses of males and females (see Table 7). It also is important to point out that since the Chi-Square method is sensitive to the number of responses in each cell, and this sample size was relatively small, that a larger sample may yield different results. Further, the data indicated that 28.5% of males and 23% of females responded negatively to this item and 28.5% of males versus 14% of females responded "N/A". In essence, the study indicates that only slightly over half (56%) of the respondents feel the campuses at Southwest College are safe.

In addition, when students were asked if they had ever encountered an incident that made them feel unsafe 84% of the sample indicated that they had not, and 13% answered "YES". Hence, although the perception of the Southwest College campuses being safe is only moderate (56%), the fact that **only** 13% of the sample responded "YES" they had had "incidents" occur, indicates the perception is not all together valid. It

is highly possible that there are other variables that may be effecting students' perception of safety at Southwest College.

In response to the second objective, to determine if safety issues really influenced where students took their classes, the study revealed several things. First, the number of respondents who indicated that safety is a factor determining where they take classes was 54, a whopping 78% of the total sample. Only 15 or 22% gave a negative response to this item. The 78% who responded "YES" was the highest percent calculated in the entire study. When the Chi-Square Test for Independence was computed for the variable "sex" (male/female), it was revealed that there was a significant difference in the responses of males and females (χ^2 obt. = 11.87, χ^2 critical = 6.635) at the .01 alpha level. Females (62%) felt stronger about safety being a factor which determined where they took classes than males (16%). When the Cramers V-Test for Association was calculated for the data it showed a mild association (V=.42 or 42%) between sex and safety being a factor determining where classes would be taken in favor of females. In addition, when the mean score for the response was compared with the mean sex score by the T-Test for correlated data, a value of 5.39 was computed. This was found to be significant at the .0001 level. The data strongly suggests that students, as a whole, do consider safety issues when determining where they will attend classes. In addition, the statistical test results indicate that women are even more concerned. When the variable "Ethnic affiliation" was examined, it was found that 73% of Whites responded "YES", 83% of Blacks responded "YES", 88% of Hispanics responded "YES" and (84%) of all others (collectively) responded "YES".

Students overwhelmingly responded "YES" (71%) that some organization or program should be formed to address concerns of safety as well as other concerns at Southwest College in contrast, only 17% of the sample responded "NO". It is important to note that the percent (71%) is the second highest proportion response. Conclusively, it is the prevailing perception of students that the creation of such an organization or program would be favorable.

When asked to respond to whether or not Southwest College is willing to provide people and programs to address the concerns of students, responses were favorable. A mean score ($\bar{x}$) of 6.7 (rounded to 7) was achieved when computed from a table ranging from one to ten. The standard deviation for the distribution was 1.88. Using quartiles for relative standing, a score of 7 falls within the third quartile (Q3). In further response, (68%) of the sample indicated that they felt that someone was available most of the time to express their concerns to. These responses indicated that students are generally satisfied with Southwest College's efforts to provide people and services to address their concerns.

Finally, it was revealed that nearly half of the respondents believed that students at Southwest College encounter problems that are not directly related to crime. This proportion indicates that there is great concern in regard to non-safety problems, but also indicates that there may be an equal concern for crime related matters. The study showed that (49%) of the sample believed that such problems existed at Southwest College. When the respondents were asked to give examples of the types of problems their responses were many and varied. After closely examining the responses, the

researcher grouped them into (3) categories. The categories were Counselor concerns, Academic concerns, and Facility concerns respectfully. The frequency of responses assigned to each of these categories are not an indication that that category is a problem, merely that the responses fall within that domain. This in no way is an indication of how good or bad the "category" is performing, nor should it be interpreted as such. The frequency of categorical responses are given in another section of this study.

Conclusion

The statistical data and findings in this study were sufficient to lead the investigator to arrive at several specific conclusions. First, the study showed that students believe Southwest College to be relatively safe, and indicate that there has not been any unsafe incidents occurring in any significant numbers. However, it was obvious that students are concerned and focused on crime and safety in an around the Southwest College campuses. Moreover, it is also clear that students support the idea of some program that would address concerns and problems over a broad spectrum not only crime. Women respondents appear to be more focused on crime in regard to where they will attend classes. This is a significant factor as women (females) are the largest group represented at Southwest College. Along with the fact that a large proportion of men are also concerned about crime, it is likely that students' perception of how "safe" a campus is could determine which campuses they will attend within the Southwest College System. However, this was not within the scope of this study, but could be the focus of similar studies.

Finally, it was also revealed that students basically perceive Southwest College to be providing adequate services and available personnel to address their concerns. They feel relatively safe, but indicated by their responses that some things should be changed to create more secure environments on the Southwest College campuses. In addition, when students responded to Item X and these responses were catergorized (Counselor/Academic/Facilities), it was discovered that many problems lie within the Facilities domain. In interpreting this data, it must be remembered that many of these problems exist because most administrators, coordinators, specialists, and others have to operate on non-Southwest College property, and consequently have little control over what happens or does not happen on that property. Likewise, many other statistics generated from this study should be interpreted with caution, and not used out of the context for which they were designed.

Appendix

1 - Southwest College Student Survey

SOUTHWEST COLLEGE
STUDENT SURVEY

In order to address the problems and concerns of our student body, faculty, and others here at Southwest college, we must first be able to identify these problems and concerns.
This survey instrument was designed to measure the attitudes and perceptions of a portion(sample) of our population here at S.W. College in regard to those problems and concerns. The items refer to S.W. College only.

I. Demographic Information: (Circle appropriate number)
Age Range:
1. 17-22 3. 28-33
2. 22-27 4. 34-above

II. Ethnic Affiliation:
1. White 3. Hispanic
2. Black 4. Other

III. Sex: 1. Male 2. Female

IV. Do you feel that the campuses here at Southwest College are relatively safe?
1. ()Yes 2. ()No 3. ()N/A

V. Have you ever had an incident at Southwest College which made you feel unsafe?
1. ()Yes 2. ()No 3. ()N/A

VI. Do you feel that some program should be initiated at S.W. College to help monitor and react to any unsafe or otherwise problematic situations?
1. ()Yes 2. ()No 3. ()N/A

VII. Is safety a factor that you consider when determining where you will take your college classes?
1. ()Yes 2. ()No 3. ()N/A

VIII. Do you feel that there is someone available most of the time at the various campuses to express your concerns to?
1. ()Yes 2. ()No 3. ()N/A

IX. On a scale of 1-10 (1=Least, 10=Most) indicate to what degree you feel S.W. College has provided people or programs to address your concerns.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

X. Do you feel that students at S.W. College encounter problems sometimes that are not of a safety nature?
1. ()Yes 2. ()No 3. ()N/A

(over)

If you answered yes to #X, give some examples of what these problems may be. Write them down below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

References

Borg, W.R. and Gall, M.D. (1989). Educational Research: An Introduction (5th Edition), New York: Longman.

Bruning, James L. and Kintz, K.L. (1968). Computational Handbook of Statistics Glenview, IL: Scott and Foreman.

Healey, Joseph F. (1984). Statistics: A Tool For Social Research Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

National Education Association, the NEA Research Bulletin Washington: National Education Association, 1986, p.99.